

What are the three types of environment and how do they affect my health?



Bernalillo County Health & Social Services

Health Promotion Team

The word environment generally means everything around you.

In public health, this broad term is often separated into 3 types of environment:

The **natural environment** refers to the parts of an environment that are natural such as trees, animals, air and water.



The **built environment** refers to the parts of an environment that are built by humans such as streets, houses, buildings, the design of neighborhoods, and the products we use and consume.

www.environment.ucla.edu/reportcard/article.asp?parentid=11963



Community health is ...
active transportation

The **social environment** means the interactions, or lack of interaction, we have with other people such as our family, friends, co-workers, community groups, etc.



Not all aspects of our communities fit neatly into these categories. There is overlap. A park is designed and contains human-made things, part of the built environment, but also hopefully has natural things in it and allows for positive social interaction. **A healthy community is one in which all three types of environments work in combination to support healthy living.**

Healthy Communities happen by design

<http://www.cdc.gov/features/healthycommunities/>



The built environment affects our social environment. Research shows that social networks and community involvement help us be healthier. Our communities can be designed and built to encourage more social interaction with adequate street lighting, sidewalks in good condition, parks and public art within walking distance, among other things.